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432nd Bomb. Sqdn.
17th Bomb. Gp.
A.P.O. 520, c/o Postmaster N.Y.C.



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Censored by:
Lt. F.W. Loops, A.C.

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June 27, 1943 (Sunday)

Hello, Folks!.

Here's that man again! - And the best I can figure it, another Sunday - so by all laws of man + the calendar of which I don't have - it must mean that another week has gone by - tho at this point I wouldn't swear to anything. This Sunday will be a bit different, tho. - I'll be able to go to church like a normal being instead of first going out on a mission and bombing the hell out of somebody! ~~first~~ ! Oh, it's a great life.

Gee, you should have seen us go the other day. - We had the American Airlines beat. - It seems somebody wanted to move - so instead of "vans" like you folks use - they called in the bombers and made transports out of them. - What a queer assortment of junk we carried! But we got 'em moved in a surprisingly short time. It was fun - you should have seen all the planes! - a regular shuttle service. - I flew on almost all the trips - and what trips. - On Both ends of the journey - it was clear weather - while only 5 minutes away from the fields - each one - we would run into cloudy weather + thunderstorms! - And to add to it - the terrain we had to go over was very mountainous - with peaks up around 4000' or 4500'. - We would just take off - climb to about 5000' take up our compass course + go on instruments! - Just about time to be over our destination - we'd break out into clear weather - look down - see the field, - and come on in to land! - It was like that on each trip. Golly, - when we think of flying back in the states - with all the radio beams + facilities at your disposal - and none at all over here - and on top of that, of our maps which aren't even accurate - you just think - what a cinch

2/ those fellows have! Don't think we're complaining - it's lots of fun - cause besides learning on every trip, - there's a certain feeling of elation at your own ability to cope with things. - It all just adds up to "ye olde experience" and the more you know + have the greater your chances are. -

Put on some low shoes and went to town yesterday. - It's the first time in about three weeks I've worn anything but G.I. ones! - Even put on some clean clothes for the occasion, too! There's just no holding me down once I get started! - We had a funny thing happen to us there too. - (I don't make all these queer stories up - they actually happen) After roaming around town awhile - we heard someone behind us speak, a couple of girls we had somehow missed. - They spoke just a little English + asked us if we would like to go to a dance? - Well, - anything is worth a try - you can always leave, - so we said, "yes". They give us an address and tell us to be there at 5 o'clock - we said "O.K." - Well, - about 4:30 - we start wondering how to get ~~th~~ to the house of the party, - After all - it's the first time we'd ever been to the place - and these French names for streets never register on our feeble minds. Well, - we started out and after asking our way from police every block or so - we eventually get there. - Of course we can't understand the policemen either - but if we ask often enough - we can go by their gestures! -

When we got to the house - we were met by an entire French family - Father, mother, big brother, Big Sister (the one who had invited us), little brother + little Sister! - Big Brother knew about 5 more words of English than big sister, which made a total of 15 or 20! - Well, we sat around and grinned at each other awhile - when finally Big brother sat down to play the piano. After 5 minutes - we finally recognized the tune as the French version of "Dina" (you know - From Carolina). - He also knew several other American tunes such as "The Beer Barrel Polka" - the only

trouble was - they weren't played too well. - Sorta like he had taken one of these ~~$~~ courses you hear offered over the radio - and he only took 50 cents worth! - After awhile, he settled down and played a bit of classical music which wasn't bad.

Well, - about this time other guests & relatives started arriving. It ended up with about 25 or 30 people in a room about 15' x 15', including a table & piano! - Then - as the victrola seemed temperamental - someone started playing the piano again someone else started beating a tambourine, and another "stroking" a banjo! - Then, - they actually started dancing in that little room with all those people - and let's not leave out the table & piano! - It was almost as crowded as some of the G. W. dances I've been to! - Along about this time some more guests started arriving - and things really got crowded. - We found out the occasion for all this was the birthday of the Big Sister who had invited us in the first place. The poor people were certainly having a swell time trying to make us feel a part of them, and I think they were just a mite proud for their neighbors to see that ~~the~~ among their guests were American "air plane drivers"! - They started serving some wine - but soon ran out with such a mob. - for cake they had bread with some sort of preserves or something spread all over it. - About the time I left we had seen their predicament - so we all (the American officers, 5 of us) chipped in and one of us went to the store and bought about 5 or 6 qts. of wine so they could really have their festivities! - We can't spend our money for anything so it gave us a chance to help them and to show our appreciation ~~too~~. You should go to one of these affairs where you can't speak to anyone. We of course have a little book - of English - French words - but not knowing the pronounciation, we never recognize the words - so we don't even carry the dam things around with us.

By not being able to spend our money - I don't mean the populace won't let us spend it - it's just that there's nothing worth buying. And should there be some little something that interests us - well - the prices go sky high as soon as an American shows any interests in it. - We never buy anything without bargaining. You can get most anything for half the marked price, cause they just mark 'em double to start with. Even then we get gipped! I've been looking for some little souvenirs to send home to you but can't really find a thing worth the trouble of sending to you, even for the sentimental values if any.

I almost shot me an Arab the other day. - They are most obnoxious and repulsive too - and steal anything lying around loose. We really have orders to shoot them if they won't go away! - The other day - our tent was on the very edge of the camp - one of 'em stole almost everything our navigator, Jim Carey, had. - He took it during the night so when we woke up - ~~it~~ it was all gone. The next night we had everything inside the tent (sorta like locking the stable, etc.) and towards dawn I happened to wake up. - Well, I heard this noise - and for a second - after just waking up - I thought it a rat - not unusual. Well, The noise was right behind ~~the~~ head of my cot - and I thought of my things that were left just inside the tent there - and the stealing of the night before. - I reached down for my automatic, but a piece of my bed-roll had fallen over it and it didn't come to hand readily. - so instead of making a noise looking for it, I grabbed my flash-light, turned over on my stomach and flashed the light at the noise. - I saw an Arab's hand sticking under the tent flap - giving my baggage a going over. - What I said to myself is ~~...~~ censorable - but having just wakened I hadn't all my facilities - so instead of ~~waking~~ up someone

5/ else goes to catch him - I just swung at the hand with my flashlight - wham! - I hope I broke a bone in it. - anyway, he withdrew his hand and all you could hear were the rocks tumbling after him as he ran down the hill - faster than he ever moved before, I imagine. On going outside I saw that he had left loot he had gathered from another tent! - That's what he got ~~fer~~ for being hogish! - But no fooling - had I found my gun when I reached for it, I know I would have shot him without a second's thought. Nothing makes me so mad as a thief, - and an Arab one at that. - and believe it or not - I'm not a bad shot with my old 45! Did you think your son & brother could get to that point? - Well, I couldn't have 'cept Arabs are Arabs and the night before they were taking shots at us - and have you ever been shot at? We broke that up fast too, - but that's another tale.

It seems that that day was some sort of a religious holiday for the Arabs - and rumor had it that if an Arab could kill a non believer on that day - it would insure their going to their equivalent of heaven. - Don't know about that, just know that just before dark - ~~of~~ about 5 horsemen galloped up on a hill across the valley & started shooting! - Right over the officers area! - We of course - didn't stand there for targets, - and soon had 'em running. - You've never seen a bunch of Airmen on the ground go into action have you? - Oh, well, - anything to keep life from becoming monotonous (monotonous).

You should see the country around here. - Real "edjuc-ashuning"! - There are lots of things I cannot say - but there are also some I can - and amongst them are old Roman cities left in ruins thru the years - and some of their aqueducts still standing, running along the landscape. Now I can study my Roman Architecture first hand! - It really is remarkable the way these things still stand. - They certainly were no slouches from the engineers standpoint. The

6/ aqueducts running along the ground look just like the pictures you see of 'em in history books. - But then again, why shouldn't they? - It's just seeing them in person, I guess. -

- Just had to take time out for dinner. - Quite the best meal in days - but that's not saying an awful lot. -: Corned beef, beans, cabbage & some canned cherries. We've been eating the regular Army "C" rations (Beans & stew) for all meals the past few days. Most of us have gotten to get food on our own and even cook it. - Some of the fellows have these stoves that burn gasoline & works like a blow torch. As you've guessed our Air Corps "K" rations I was raving about have become exhausted!

Am kinda glad we got in this Bomb. Gp. - They all are, besides being swell fellows, experienced and know the score. At first we were dubious 'cause we were separated from most of those we came over with, but don't think we will regret it. Am finally separated from John Freeman - so that is the last link of our "clique" that left Lubbock for Avon Park. - But we'll be seeing each other at times, surely.

Gee! - I just took stock of the number of pages I've written - Think I'll get it copywrited if it keeps on! - Oh, well. I knew I had the urge to write, but didn't think it was quite as big an urge to fill all these pages! -

Be glad when mail finally gets to coming in for me. - I was satisfied for awhile - but after awhile - it gets to gnawing like when you're hungry! -

Haven't weighed for awhile - but with the works sweat I've been doing - am down just a mite, I think. Had it to lose, however as I had put on some at Avon. -

Well - bye for now - I'll stop and give you & me a rest! - More next time if I can think of something else to write.

Lots & Lots of Love,

Frank

P.S. - Don't mind my changing the tenses of my verbs all around. I must have absorbed some of these Damon Runyon stories I've been reading!